4/15/02

FINAL RULE TO REDUCE TOXIC AIR EMISSIONS FROM FACILITIES THAT APPLY SURFACE COATINGS TO LARGE APPLIANCES

FACT SHEET

TODAY'S ACTION

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is promulgating a final rule to reduce toxic air emissions from the surface coating of large appliances. Toxic air pollutants, also called air toxics, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects.

- The surface coating of large appliances is a process of applying a protective, decorative, or functional coating layer to an appliance used for household, commercial, industrial, or recreational purposes. This final regulation covers large appliance products such as cooking equipment, refrigeration equipment, dishwashers, trash compactors, and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning units. Coating materials include, but are not limited to, paints, stains, sealers, topcoats, basecoats, primers, inks, and adhesives.

- Air toxics are emitted from the coating application process, drying/curing operations, mixing and thinning operations, and cleaning operations. Surface coating operations can emit a variety of air toxics including: toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene, glycol ethers, including ethylene glycol monobutyl ether, hexane, methylene chloride, methylene diphenyl diisocyanate, methyl ethyl ketone, and methyl isobutyl ketone. The health problems caused by these air pollutants include chronic health disorders, e.g., irritation of the lung, eyes, and mucus membranes and effects on the central nervous system, and acute health disorders (e.g., lung irritation and congestion, nausea, and vomiting). The EPA has classified one of the emitted HAP (methylene chloride) as a probable human carcinogen.

- EPA worked with industry representatives, individual States (including regulators, enforcement personnel, and small business advocates), trade associations, and the Institute of Clean Air Companies to develop the final standards. Citizen groups participated in the comment process.

BACKGROUND

- Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to regulate emissions of 188 listed toxic air pollutants. For listed categories of "major" sources (those that emit 10 tons per year or more of a listed pollutant or 25 tons per year or more of a combination of pollutants), the Clean Air Act requires EPA to develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution reduction measures known as maximum achievable control technology.

- EPA's published list of industry groups to be regulated (known as source categories) includes large appliance surface coating operations.

- EPA published the proposed standards in the Federal Register on December 22, 2001 (65 FR 81134).

BENEFITS AND COST

- Today's action would reduce total air toxics emissions by 1,190 tons per year, or about 45 percent from 1995 emission levels.

- Additional benefits of this action include a decrease in emissions of other pollutants, such as volatile organic compounds which contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, the primary constituent of smog. When inhaled, even at very low levels, ground-level ozone can cause acute respiratory problems, aggravate asthma, reduce lung capacity, inflame lung tissue, and impair the body's immune system.

- EPA expects implementation of this final rule to result in national costs of $1.63 million for the entire industry. These costs take into account the implementation of pollution prevention activities such as reformulation of coatings. They also include monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting costs.

WHAT THE FINAL RULE REQUIRES

- Today's final rule sets specific limits on air emissions at any new, reconstructed, or existing facility that applies coatings to large appliance parts and products and is a major source of toxic air emissions. The emission limits apply to all processes associated with surface coating activities.

- EPA expects today's final rule to affect about 70 existing facilities.

- The emission standards give the industry choices and flexibility in how they reduce toxic air releases. These compliance options are:

  (1) Use coatings that have been reformulated to reduce the air toxic content.

  (2) Upgrade or install new capture-and-control systems to reduce air toxic emissions.

  (3) Use any combination of (1) and (2) above.

- Facilities must also meet certain recordkeeping and reporting requirements including semiannual

compliance reports.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To download the final rule from EPA's website on the Internet, go to “Recent Actions” at the following address: http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html.

- The final rule and background information document are also available through EPA’s Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (Docket Number A-97-52) by calling (202) 260-7548 or fax (202) 260-4000 (a reasonable fee may be charged for copying).

- For general information about the promulgated standards, contact Mr. H. Lynn Dail of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Coatings and Consumer Products Group at (919) 541-2363, or by electronic mail at: dail.lynn@epa.gov. Or visit the large appliances (surface coating) website at: http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/lapp/lapplpg.html.

- The EPA's Office of Air and Radiation's (OAR) homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program and many other air pollution programs and issues. The OAR home page address is: www.epa.gov/oar/.